

As we drove across the Fremont Bridge, Jana said, "see what did I tell you, lots of bridges for you to work with".

I had never been to Portland, Oregon. Not until that summer for a job interview, it was 1996. Three years earlier before she and Bill had left Kansas City for Portland, I had given her one of my prints for her birthday. It was a night shot of a bridge in Kansas City crossing the Missouri river. One of my many photo assignments second year at art school was night photography. We were all usually up all night anyway and this didn't take time out of the day away from other studio work.

I thought to myself as I remembered that assignment and how it was probably one of only a couple photographs of bridges I had ever taken. Geoff was the one that was into bridges. I met Geoff my freshman year of art school.

"It's not art, it's foundations." That's what was painted on the ceiling of our foundations studio. Foundations was four hours of class 4 days a week and at least 8 hours a day homework, on top of art history, literature and a part-time job. Geoff was in another studio. I remember the first time I saw him. It was orientation. He was tall, dark hair and green eyes. How perfect is that? He had this comfortable rumpled look about him. I didn't think much about him after that first day. I didn't see him much, just in passing here or there. Second year was a different story.

Since then, I hadn't allowed myself to think about him very often. Sometimes I never knew what would trigger the deep ache of missing him. Today it was those bridges. It almost always was a bridge. It was many things, I would be alone in car crossing a bridge somewhere and a rush of him would come over me. His smell, the little noise he made as he slept and his ease. He was easy, not complicated. Just easy.

As we headed downtown to park for my first visit to Saturday Market memories of 1987 overwhelmed me. Almost ten years. For some reason I couldn't escape it that day, Jana mentioning the print, and the bridges. I rarely let myself even think about that year; it wasn't easy, so much of life happened that year so quickly.

I thought that by giving her that picture it was somehow giving away another visual memory I had of that year. Not that I had it out or that it was part of a portfolio I carried. It just wouldn't be there. I guess I also thought that by moving to Portland, maybe that time in Kansas City finally would be put to rest and behind me. Although, one of my favorite lines in a movie is, "just because you leave, doesn't mean your not still in the same god damn place". I meet Jana and Bill after graduation. They were great friends and completely outside of that circle in school. There was no history, no reminders. It was fresh and new.

As Jana and I walked through the market, seeing the other bridges, their structure, their grace and age, all I could see were the hundreds of prints and negatives of Geoff's, bridge after bridge after bridge.

The market was a great mix of old and new. Flea market finds, sitting next to new shiny steel sculptures. We left the market full of color, craft, leather, steel, and wax. The smell of popcorn and Bento was fading, as walked toward the river to the large sidewalk, or boardwalk. It was a great day people where everywhere. We passed people going every direction on foot and all kinds of wheels. Small ones under their feet, larger ones under their ass. Today there was no escaping the bridges, no escaping who and what odd connection those structure held for me.

I stopped and walked to a bench near the underneath of the Steele Bridge. As I looked out at the river I felt the water start to come from the bottom of my eyes, filling my lower lids. It was warm and familiar, but not welcome. At any moment, if I didn't gain control, they were ready to empty. I needed to let out more than tears. Jana was a good friend; we had become friends long after Geoff.

Looking out at the water I said, "Geoff was the one who was into bridges". Jana said, "Geoff Lehr?" "No", I said, "Geoff Edward's" At this point, my eyelids could no longer hold the water that was welling up. As some of it escaped and I looked in Jana's direction. "OK, who is Geoff Edwards?" she says. "The love of my life, and the father of the child I miscarried at almost the moment he died", I said. I knew that for the first time, to anyone, except my therapist; I was going to tell this story. One I had kept to myself for almost ten years. "All right, start at the beginning", Jana said.